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NOTICE 62

THE INDIA CULTURES QUARTERLY

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Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, M.P., India

VOL. 18 SECOND QUARTER 1960 NO. 2

NOTICE

Our procedure with respect to renewals may be explained for the mutual benefit of magazine and subscriber.

1. India Subscriptions

Subscriptions to addresses in India are automatically renewed unless the reader informs us in advance. The renewal is sent V.P.P., after first having sent the subscriber a printed notice to expect the same. Some subscribers, on receiving the expiration notice, send us their subscription fees by Money Order which is appreciated by us and saves V.P.P. charges. But the time factor sometimes creates confusion. The subscriber may send his subscription to us about the same time we are mailing out the current issue, so that the two cross in the mails. On the one hand, we receive the Money Order, and on the other hand, the subscriber receives the V.P.P. Some subscribers have thus paid twice, and we are sorry for this inconvenience to them. In this case, we enter their subscription for two years. Others have refused the V.P.P. because of having sent their Money Orders, which is proper to do. It would seem, therefore, that the best way to avoid this inadvertency would be for the subscriber to send his Money Order (if that be his wish) very soon after receiving the expiration notice. If he be willing to receive the V.P.P., he should not send us a Money Order.

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a bill received from us may not necessarily mean that we have failed to receive and record your welcome renewal in the meantime.

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THE MID-INDIA REGION

Dr Henry H. Presler

Note: This regular feature of the India Cultures Quarterly is contributed by the director of the Department of Organized Research of Leonard Theological College. Dr Presler is engaged in empirical studies of cultures in an urban context, using the theory and methodology of social science.

Primitive Religion in the City

At first glance the title of this article appears to contain two contradictory concepts, the 'primitive' and the 'urban'. The extent of the contradiction may be gauged from the following definitions.

By 'primitive' we do *not* mean that which is ancient, or crude, or superstitious, or elementary, or backward, or false, or original, or old-fashioned, or pristine, or uncivilized, or inferior. We are *not* using the word 'primitive' in connection with geometry (primitive axes or co-ordinates), nor in connection with music (a primitive chord), nor in connection with painting (primitive colors), nor with the church (primitive fathers), nor with anatomy (primitive groove), nor with geology (primitive rocks). We are using the word 'primitive' with reference to religion in a society of human beings. Accordingly we must pursue our definition to the concept of primitive society, from whence we shall return to primitive religion, and finally reach our starting point, the concept of 'primitive'.

By primitive society we mean that society in which the quantitative indices are numerically low. What indices? The amount of specialization of individuals, the amount of consumer goods obtained by trade, the number of institutions to which an individual may belong, and the degree of complexity of the institutions. In other words, in a primitive society there are few if any specialists; each man performs all the acts necessary to the continuation of human life. In a primitive society the amount of trade is very slight; people make almost everything they need. The number of institutions to which a primitive man belongs is small (his family and his band or clan or religion). In primitive society the institutions are simple, consisting of one or a few families, with no formal organization, no schedule of meetings, possibly with age levels and authority structures. Any society having such low indices is defined as primitive.

Having refused to apply the adjectives of paragraph two to such a society (ancient, crude, superstitious, etc.), we are in search of an adjective other than 'primitive' to describe a society whose aforementioned quantitative indices are numerically low; that adjective is 'simple'. By a primitive society we mean a simple society, one with low numerical indices.

Conversely, an urban society is 'complex', in that it contains more specialists than non-specialists; the index of specialization is numerically high (tanners, druggists, radio-announcers, whole-salers, foremen, professors . . . people who concentrate their attention and effort on one series of acts only, depending on other specialists to supply their fur coats, medicines, wireless information, etc.). In complex urban society the index of trade is very high; an almost complete exchange of products takes place. The number of institutions to which the city-dweller may belong ranges from a dozen to over a hundred (trade union, church, club, hockey team, etc., etc.). Urban institutions are themselves internal hierarchies of prestige and duty, possessed of elaborate personnel organization, and interlocking with other institutions in such a complex net of power checks that a governmental inquiry cannot unravel the tangle.

From the complex urban society we return to the simple primitive society, and then to primitive religion. By primitive religion we mean the religion of a primitive society. This brings us to our starting point, the adjective, 'primitive'; the reader should now realize that this word refers to the social state of quantitative simplicity, with reference to the four indices already mentioned.

The first paragraph of this article began by suspecting a contradiction in its title. What is the extent of the contradiction in the topic: Primitive Religion in an Urban Context? Well, there is not so much a contradiction as an anachronism. How does it happen that simplicity may exist within a context of complexity? Why is not the simplicity dissolved into the complexity? Or, why does the simplicity persist as a separate yet constituent unit within the urban complexity? It seems to the writer that these questions have not received the attention they deserve, possibly because it is not generally known that primitive religion does exist in an urban context. Most people imagine a student of primitive religion vanishing into an Amazon jungle, or disappearing into the desert of middle Australia, or ending up in the pot of a cannibal in a remote South Sea Island. With such mental images they suppose primitive religion to be found only in a jungle, at most, under a thatched roof in one of its uncounted clearings. This article attempts to show that primitive religion does exist in at least one city of mid-India, containing 350,000 people, plus wireless towers, mobile police units, nineteen colleges, two railroads, several modern hospitals, water mains and flush toilets. Primitive religion exists in this city in which may also be found the formally educated elite who are prepared to dub it as elementary, backward, false, uncivilized and inferior, adjectives in which the writer has no interest whatever. He

is concerned with the social fact that primitive religion is alive and flourishing within smell of the fumes of the city's industrial smokestacks. Not only is it virile, but it seems to be stimulated to foliate into myriads of unique forms. Primitive religion in this urban context is actually strengthened by the disorganizing experiences and ideologies of our sprauling conglomerate of lakhs of people, who find the complexities of urban life too taxing on their nervous systems, and fall back upon the simplicities of existence. Of course, there is the negativism of urban secularism destroying all belief in the sacred, but this is manifest in the university-trained person, not among the masses. Primitive religion is more than holding its own in this mid-India city, as I am about to show.

At this point some reader may demand of me a definition for the term 'religion'. I shall beg leave to demure, being reluctant to add any more confusion to our academic minds. By religion I mean what my respondents say is their religion, and that is about to be described.

One last question: Are we to exclude magic? The answer is, We will exclude magic from this article due to lack of space. Primitive religion in this urban context is not usually separable from magic; magic and religion go hand in hand. We will confine our attention to primitive religion because we are trying to write an article, not a book.

The Content of Primitive Religion

There is not much debate as to what is to be contained within the term, Primitive Religion, because the religion(s) of simple societies have been studied objectively. It is no tax on the intellect to recognize a simple society, once the four aforementioned indices are applied, and hundreds of such have been recognized and studied. The analysts in our professorial ranks have taken these field work reports of many branches of humanity, and have compared, contrasted and equated them. Out of the mixture in solution, a residue has been precipitated. Most scholars agree that Primitive Religion contains such phenomena as the following: Animism, Totemism, Fetishism (a term now in scholastic disrepute but nevertheless designating a class of phenomena), Mana, Animatism, Taboo (Tabu is taken to be the Polynesian variety), preoccupation with *Rites de Passage*, Mythological Knowledge, Polytheism, and, of course, Magic. These topics do not exhaust the content of Primitive Religion, and will serve to classify some of the sacred simplicity to be found within our urban complexity. In other words, to study animism a resident of this city need not head for the jungle; he need not even leave town; he may not be required to walk outside his own gate. Indeed, my college built a wall to keep the animists out of the campus! (And failed to exclude them). In this article we illustrate the presence of simplicity in a context of complexity, with one world view (animism) characteristic of some primitive societies, which world view flourishes in our urban center.

Animism

According to the Dictionary of Sociology, animism is 'the belief that all things, animate and inanimate, are endowed with personal indwelling souls'. The *Dictionary of Anthropology* says that animism is 'a belief in individual spiritual beings and in a future state'. *The Encyclopaedia of Social Science* turns historian and philosopher by defining animism as 'one of the oldest (the historian) inventions (the philosopher) of man', although its writer, Ruth Benedict, was not present to observe what was invented by man in those primeval days, and what just simply *was*.

Suppose we take the first two definitions and divide them into four categories: (*a*) Animate beings with indwelling souls; (*b*) Inanimate things with indwelling souls; (*c*) Individual spiritual beings; (*d*) The future state.

(a) Animate beings with Indwelling Souls

1. *Plants*

Although the orthodox theory of metempsychosis would ascribe a soul to every plant, we notice three plants in our city embodying the animism characteristic of the world-view of primitive society. They are: *jawara*, *naglata*, and *tulsi*.

The term jawara signifies sprouting grain, and we know of wheat, rice and barley being used. The seeds are planted in moist soil in earthen pots and kept in a dark room during the nine days of the Ramnaumi Festival in the months of Kuwar (fall season) and Chaitra (spring season). When brought out the sprouts are some six to ten inches long, and yellow. They are believed to contain the being of *devi*, or goddess, until their immersion in a river or pool at the conclusion of the rituals, and her presence stimulates abnormal behaviour on the part of devotees carrying the sacred pots of sprouts.

The naglata is a creeper found in the straw enclosures of growers of betel leaf, and contains a god propitiated by these truck-gardeners, who depend upon him for personal safety and a good crop. The creeper is the focus of their rituals and sacred attitudes.

Tulsi is the name of the goddess believed to reside in the basil plant. She is very popular with literate and illiterate women, who tend their plants daily, and perform rituals with reference to this shrub, morning and evening, with special festivals in her honor, including her annual marriage. These plants may be observed on altars erected in courtyards, and on the upper verandahs and roofs of houses.

Floral plants are used as offerings during rituals, and are not considered as emphatic embodiments of spirits. A decisive evidence of this is the practice of offering flowers to the tulsi plant's goddess, but the tulsi plant is never offered to any flower.

2. *Trees*

The nim and the pipal trees vie for first place as the habitats of spirits, whether located in the garden of the illiterate, or at the helm of vehicular traffic in the main thoroughfare. The nim tree is the year around home of devi, the goddess of the masses, usually antagonistic to man and causing him trouble, such as disease (especially smallpox), or misfortune. During a smallpox epidemic cold water is ritually poured on the nim tree 'to cool the goddess' and consequently to lower the fever of patients. Small shrines appear at the base of the nim tree. The pipal is considered by both literates and illiterates to be the habitat of the soul of a Brahmin who died an unnatural death, he being required to indwell the tree until the termination of his normal life span, when he leaves the tree for further disposition by God. Consequently the sacred thread is wrapped around the trunk by devotees, and lamps are burned at its base each evening. By the literates the pipal is supposed to contain Brahma in the roots, Shiva in the trunk, Vishnu in the branches, and the incarnations of Vishnu in the leaves, besides other gods.

Other trees in the city containing spirits, each with his or her own system of rituals, festivals and mythology, include the amla, pakkar, palash, aodumbar, banyan, tamarind, kadam, mahua.

In addition to these trees, certain leaves are thought by our urbanites to be the residences of divinities, namely: akouwa leaves, bakin leaves, banana leaves, bel leaves, guava leaves, pipal leaves, and woodapple leaves.

3. *Animals*

Orthodox metempsychosis also has reference to animals. But the following animals are specifics for primitive religion: those having spirits in themselves which are powerful gods; those who are the mounts ridden by gods, and who are able to communicate with the latter. In the first class, the foremost example is the snake, particularly the varieties of cobra, who bite men not because they are snakes, but because the god in them is offended at the victim. The cow and the monkey are said to contain souls, but in our city little religious attention is paid to either. The cow is worshipped once a year by the herdsmen. The only monkeys are in captivity and serve to amuse.

The mounts of the gods are more numerous. The bull, crocodile, dog, elephant (I have seen the elephant ritualized for his own sake also), eagle, horse, lion, mouse, peacock, swan, and tiger are the faithful steeds of their particular gods and are communicants in the spirit world. We have evidence to show that former townsmen regarded the boar either as a steed or as a primary spirit.

4. *Humans*

Our city assumes that every human body contains a spirit; every human is a soul. But some human bodies have more powerful spirits

than others, as may be seen in the rituals directed to certain of the living and of the dead.

The Living:—Humans with powerful spirits may be classified as follows: 1. The Strong (physically); 2. The Pious; 3. The Horrible; 4. The Wise; 5. The Ecstatic. I have been told that another class, The Law-breaker, has been so regarded in the past, and know of several shrines in the memory of such Robin Hoods who robbed the rich and helped the poor.

Class one, The Strong, includes living humans of great physical prowess, the so-called Pahalwan Babas, extolled in the youth akharas of the city. Class two, The Pious, includes the sants (saints), the bhagats (devotees), the sadhus (mendicants), the sannyasins (ascetics), and at least one living pir (perfect religious) known to me personally. Class three, The Horrible, contains persons called aghoris and who eat loathsome matter, including that found in burial grounds. Several local men are so defined, and much feared. Class four, The Wise, includes the gurus (teachers), the rishis (sages), and the pandits. Class five, The Ecstatics, are especially revered during their spirit possession; this class is very large in our city.

In addition to the former may be mentioned the husband of the *pativrita stri*, the perfectly devoted wife, who regards him as her god. The pious child may so regard his or her parent of either sex. The point being made with reference to the animistic attitude of primitive religion, is that in our city we find living persons who are regarded as the embodiments of supernatural beings, and who are exalted by ordinary humans to the rank of actual divinities. In every case, it is not the physical presence of that living person, not the mass of bodily stuff that excites subordination, but rather the spirit believed to be immanent in him.

The Dead: The local Cult of the Dead reveals animistic concepts as much or more than do the extraordinary living humans mentioned above. This cult is one of the most powerful and pervasive religious forces in our city. I estimate more shrines to departed spirits of humans than to any other supernatural being with the single exception of one god.

The *anima* of the dead may be classified as were the spirits of living humans, into at least six groups, and the same six. Sanctuaries and shrines are commonly seen in their honour; 90 per cent of these are not mere memorials to what is dead and gone. They are ever active sacristies into or at which the spirit returns. Certain days of the week pertain to particular spirits, who may be 'called up' and consulted by their functionaries. Or, the spirits may be induced to cure, to grant children, or to mediate with the Almighty, as do the pirs. These same spirits may be heard at night, clomping through the streets, or seen between midnight and about 2 a.m., walking up and down. On annual occasions such as their death anniversaries, they descend upon their own, transfixing them as statues, or causing them to cavort through the air, to scream, shake and weep, to charge, to leap, to swoon

from high places, so that friends must restrain them or catch them as they fall through the air. Such phenomena appear in our city in all its 'concentric zones'. The dependence upon spirits of the dead is not greater than the dependence on all the gods put together, but is greater than on any single god save one.

(b) Inanimate things with Indwelling Souls

At this point the writer is caught in a snare set by the definitions of animism quoted above. What is an inanimate thing? Are not all things inanimate? Are the words 'inanimate' and 'things' redundant? The answer to these questions will depend upon whether one is or is not an animist! Since this article is not concerned with the philosophy of religion, but with the manifestation of primitive religion in an urban context, no attempt will be made to answer these questions. Instead, it may be pointed out that what is here meant by an 'inanimate thing' is a non-living object, i.e., any object not classified under the plant and animal kingdoms of biology. If the term 'inanimate' means 'not having an animus', not having a spirit, then the phrase in the learned dictionary—'inanimate things with indwelling souls' is self-contradictory unless there be a real difference between spirit and soul in the theory of animism. The literature on animism coming to the writer's attention does not sharply differentiate spirit and soul, but regards them as more or less interchangeable. If this be correct, then the phrase becomes absurd, to wit: Things without anima having indwelling anima, which rarely is possible because anima almost always indwell. (Not one in a thousand of my informants maintain that the things is the spirit; yet, I confess I have found three or four persons who claimed that the idol was itself the spirit, and about a half dozen who maintained that the tree was itself the animus). This digression serves to inform the reader that the class of objects now being considered were never alive. As here used the term 'inanimate thing' refers to a thing that has never been alive.

1. *Stones*

Stones as bearers of animism need to be classified, as follows: First, stones that have been chipped and shaped by humans; second, stones that have not been shaped by humans. The latter class may be further subdivided into freak stones, rough stones, and quartzites.

Stones shaped by humans are regarded ambivalently: On the one hand an informant will say it is a symbol only; but on the other hand, he will regard it as the residence of the animus after the *sthapit* ceremony. *Sthapna* (to fix, to establish) is used to indicate the inauguration of the divinity at the sacred location, and the fixing of him or her there. These two meanings indicate the induction of the spirit into the sacred precincts, with focus on the shaped stone idol, and the actual confinement of the spirit there (preventing the spirit from roaming at will beyond call or control. The 'fixing' is especially desired in the case of manevolent spirits who could do all sorts of harm if wandering at large, and

may be appeased more easily if 'located'. This ambivalence is such that the informant usually regards the shaped stone as a symbol, but paradoxically, says it is 'only a stone' if the *sthapit* ceremony has not been conducted.

Stones not shaped by humans include freaks (like several enormous boulders balanced on other boulders, whose fall would be calamatous and yet which cannot be pushed over by puny men). Also included are quartzites, pieces of silica or silicon dioxide, with surfaces covered with raised lumps like solidified bubbles; they are commonly yellowish and somewhat transparent to opaque, often seeming to store up sunshine shining from within. Some say these quartzites fell from the sky like meteors, although quartz is known to be associated with granite and sandstone, of which inferior varieties are local out-croppings. Such quartzites are regarded as fit residences of divinities, and are gathered at city shrines where it will be said that the 'spirit lives in them'.

The third sub-class of stones not shaped by humans includes the rough stones of any shape, size, or color, which through some event or interpretation have come to be regarded as the residences of spirits, or gods or goddesses. That a particular stone should have been singled out above its neighbour for the presence of the spirit is inexplicable until you learn the history attending its selection. The characteristics of the stone are not relevant to its selection which was based on happenings outside the stone itself, and in the majority of cases have been forgotten by the community.

A sub sub-class of rough stones may be mentioned, namely, The Growing Stone. In all cases of such, the stone is shaped like the lingum, and as a phallic symbol, its claim to increase in size and length can be readily understood. But informants always use a verb which means 'to grow', and avoid a verb which would give the physiological sense. These growing stones are discovered in caves, although we have no local stalagmites; they are also found at large, just anywhere in the city, 'growing' perhaps an inch a year. Whether geological pressures could force out such cylindrical stones is not known locally. These phenomena are regarded with deep reverence as the very presence of one of the gods of the Triad.

With respect to the gods believed to inhabit these rough stones, I notice that some are resident only in such non-descript stones, and never in shaped stones (but the same need not be in stones at all). Why such supernatural beings have no human or animal symbols is not known; yet they are imagined as having spiritual bodies in human form. A student of primitive religions spending sufficient time in our city learns to expect rough stones to contain such divinities, and to recognize an informant's definition as locally 'reasonable'.

2. *Astral*

Other 'inanimate things with indwelling souls' at this mid-India city are three sky bodies, namely, the moon, certain stars, and the sun. Of these, the sun is conceived by more people as being the embodiment

of a god, and several hundred sun images may be seen in temples. The moon is probably second in animistic belief, whereas stars have very few adherents.

3. *Formations*

By formations we mean any recognizable shape believed to harbor spirits, whether occurring in nature or shaped by humans. The cavity is foremost among these, including the *ala* (niche in a wall for sacred purposes), the cave (if containing a growing stone), the hole (of a size a snake might enter), the *madhiya* (an artificial enclosure too small for a human even if sitting, intended as a residence for a spirit), the *taq* or *tak* (about the same as *ala*, above), and some hollow shapes appearing in Nature. The animus is thought to dwell within such.

Other formations include the mud nodules shaped by low castes and poverty-stricken persons, measuring some two to three inches in diameter, height about one inch. Sometimes these are whitewashed. Often seven mud nodules are made and each is considered the habitat of one of the Seven Sisters goddesses.

Cowdung formations are made at the Diwali season to harbor the spirit of the divinity originating from Goberdan, near Muttra, and who is believed to be in the midst of our urban community then.

An artificial formation is the tomb, made of silver and gold foil, measuring sometimes six to eight feet in height, base four to five feet. The ornate sepulchre is borne on poles on the death anniversary of the saint, whose spirit is believed to inhabit the object until its immersion in a river or tank. This is part of the local Cult of the Dead, to which should be added mention of the conical symbol of the horse ridden by a certain saint before his death, and which is thought to contain the spirit of the dead horse.

A few pounds of earth are taken by our animistic immigrants from ancestral shrines at their original locales, and transported to our city, to be mixed with water and formed into a likeness of the original chabutra (platform) or mazar (grave). The presence of the spirit is believed to be in the sacred dirt, and its resultant formation. Some say it is possible for that spirit to be 'back home' and in this *vilayati jagha* (foreign place) at the same time; others say the spirit shuttles back and forth between the two formations of sacred earth.

Other formations include such as the clay brick which was brought here from Baghdad and placed in a local *dargah* (prayer hall without roof), in one of its corner posts. At the death anniversary of the saint the spirit comes to our town's clay brick from afar, and may be induced to come out of the brick and to enter into a devotee.

4. *Water Bodies*

The goddess of the Nerbudda River (flowing south of our city) is believed to be actually present in the stream between 10 a.m. and sundown, on her festival during the cold season. She may be touched by bathing in the stream, and 'power comes out of her' into the devotee.

Occasionally animists attribute the presence of a spirit to a spring of water, issuing from the ground. There are also a few wells with spirit inhabitants. Among our numerous lakelets, are a score or more, said to contain spirits, symbolized either by flagpoles placed vertically in the water, or by shrines on the *ghats* (steps leading down to the water) for Ghatoyadevi. Some of these water spirits are connected to the sowing and harvesting of *singhara* (water nuts).

5. *Pictures*

A few believe that the spirit of the divinity is actually present in his framed picture. Some urbanites will not permit snapshots to be taken of their symbols (images) on the ground that the spirit would be taken from the symbol into the camera, and so come into the possession of the photographer.

6. *Cornices*

The Kalchuri Dynasty, and perhaps the Bundelas from afar, flourished A.D. 875-1180, and around A.D. 1500 respectively. To both cultures I attribute the fragments of sacred buildings scattered throughout our city. These cornices are decorated with excellent carvings of humans and animals. Their original definitions have not come down to us. They might have been court attendants, dancers, religious functionaries, or divinities. They are remarkable for their beauty of form, sculptured in grey granite. Present day urban animists are unanimous in defining all such as gods and goddesses. Anytime a cornice is ploughed or dug up, the animist reverently cleans it and brings the objects to some urban shrine. No *sthapit* ceremony is required because the spirit is already present in the figure.

7. *Colors*

Certain low castes regard the spirit as being present in the spot of sindhur (vermillion) daubed on the outside of the mud walls of their houses. About a dozen such spots afix protecting spirits to the vicinity, and they ward off demons.

8. *Non-biological Symbols*

By these I mean shapes not to be classified under biological forms. One such is the *nal* or crescent. The best are of silver. *Nals* 'come out of wells, fly through the air, pass through walls and boxes'. At festival time, they contain a spirit who is addressed as Nal Sahib.

9. *Books*

One major religion openly teaches that the god is present in its holy scriptures; nay, that the scriptures are the god.

(c) Individual spiritual beings

These are thought by our urbanites to live a disembodied existence, and to be 'in the air.' They 'move about from place to place and you can't say where they are at any particular time. Sometimes they

stop temporarily in trees, or in leaves of trees. Others prefer cemeteries. There are three crores of gods, so how many other spirits there are, who can say?'

These spirits give trouble even to gods. In order to frighten them away sindhur is applied to the image. 'The spirits can't abide sindhur.' Originally, *huldi* (yellow) may have been applied to the human body for the same purpose. Rarely an informant will say that huldi applied to the bride and groom render them immune from mischievous spirits; usually huldi is applied for 'God knows why; we people do it because our ancestors did.'

Another way to keep these individual spiritual beings from troubling the gods is to wave fire around the idols; this is the original use of *arthi*. Arthi is more than a beautiful service (the finest arthi service seen by me was at Vishram Ghat, Muttra), or an act of adoration; it is a quaranteen against demons hovering in the air near the god.

The spirits of dead humans also wander around their homes for some days after the decease, and come back to town for a two week period called *pitar paksh*, in the Fall Season. It is not possible to indicate exactly where the ancestral spirits are, but it may be assumed that they are in the air, hovering about the house. Usually they stay outside their former dwelling, and may be fed by leaving pots of victuals some twenty to thirty feet from the house.

The most troublesome urban sprites are the *rakshasas*, *bhut*, *pret*, *churail*, *pisach*, terms roughly translated as ogres, ghosts, imps, demons and devils, and whose maliciousness is in that order from less evil to more evil. The rakshasas are not such a bad lot because they don't bother humans often, but continually fight with the gods. The bhut and the pret chiefly frighten men, and come to them as apparitions. The churail attack humans, and the female *churailin* is a temptress lying in wait for young men. The pisach does downright cruel and wicked things to people. The difficulty with regards to them is as to their location; men have not so far succeeded in capturing and fixing them at sacred spots where they might be controlled by rituals. They can be detected by the noises they make, especially at night, or by their apparitions, or by the 'trouble' afflicting a person. In the case of the last, one should engage a medium (often a factory worker) who through ecstacy will contact the troubler, obtaining his or her name, and effecting a bargain whereby the pisach is bought off with offerings.

(d) The Future State

I have yet to meet an individual in our city who says that death ends all. The belief in some form of immortality is uniform, and in very many cases, 'experienced'. A few have 'experienced' being dead for as long as a day, and have been brought back to life again, they believe, by gods. Thousands of people have seen apparitions, and scores of thousands claim to have contacted the spirits of the dead through local mediums and ecstatics. Although the majority community believes in reincarnation, intellectually, they are true animists in

being more concerned with spirits of the dead who are suspended between the previous incarnation and the next. Our urbanites do not ask the question, When will this spirit be reincarnated? They only ask, Baba, give me a child! Or, cure my disease! Or, where is my stray buffalo? Or, why did my husband run away and leave me? Or, find me a job here in town. Questions as to the reward or punishment experienced by the spirits, as to whether they achieved salvation or damnation, as to whether they will be up- or down-graded in their reincarnation, such questions do not arise in this context. The all-encompassing question is, What can these anima do to help me, or, What must I offer to get out of their clutches?

There is another universe of discourse pertaining to the future state, and primarily concerned with the questions ignored above. *Bhakti* (devotion), *gyan* (knowledge) and *karma* (works of merit) are studiously pursued by many in order to obtain *moksha* for their souls in the future state.

Other pertinent statements with reference to life after death have been made in connection with topics above.

Later issues of the 'India Cultures Quarterly' will further describe the existence of primitive religions in an urban context. It is hoped that these remarks have helped the reader to look for such religion in his own city.

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Chapter XXXVI

Understanding the Truth

Stanza 1

Mistaking unreal things to be real begets infamy.

Stanza 2

Unerring insight devoid of delusion, dispels darkness and brings about pleasure.

Stanza 3

Heaven is nearer than earth to him who has dispelled doubts.

Stanza 4

He who has not known the truth has useless sense organs.

Stanza 5

Real knowledge consists in understanding the truth of whatever thing is said by whomsoever.

Stanza 6

Those that have learnt to know real truth are freed from the cycle of births.

Stanza 7

Concentration on the real removes undesirable births.

Stanza 8

Knowledge of glorious reality removes the foolishness of birth.

Stanza 9

Knowledge of consequences makes way for the removal of consequences.

Stanza 10

Desire, dread, and delusion, these three will be wiped off without even leaving their names (by knowledge).

Chapter XXXVII

Killing Desires

Stanza 1

Desire is the seed that brings to every one always, (the cycle of) births.

Stanza 2

If you must desire, desire no birth which is got by desirelessness.

Stanza 3

In this world there is no greater wealth than desirelessness. Nor is there anything equal to it in heaven.

Stanza 4

Purity is desirelessness, which is got through truth.

Stanza 5

He who has renounced desires, has Renounced, others have not.

Stanza 6

Fear desire; it is the one that deceives you.

Stanza 7

The consequence of desire cannot be overcome except by rooting out desire itself.

Stanza 8

He who has no desire has no trouble. But he that has, will get more and more trouble.

Stanza 9

He who has conquered the evil of desire is eternally happy.

Stanza 10

The removal of unquenchable desire is irremovable release.

Chapter XXXVIII

Ool: (Effects of deeds done in previous births)

Stanza 1

Good ool (deeds of previous birth) makes a man wealthy. Similarly the evil ool (deeds of previous birth) makes him lazy and loose his wealth.

Stanza 2

If his ool is bad even his reason will desert him and he will do foolish deeds.

Stanza 3

Even if a man increases his knowledge by the study of books still it is ool that predominates.

Stanza 4

Knowledge is obtained by one kind of Ool; wealth by another.

Stanza 5

All hindrances become help and all help hindrances according to the kind of Ool.

Stanza 6

Things belonging to a man (by ool) if thrown away will come back to him and those do not belong to him (by ool) even if guarded carefully will be lost.

Stanza 7

Even if a man has earned millions he cannot enjoy them except according to the laws of Ool set by God.

Stanza 8

The ascetics are not grieved when they are deprived of their desired objects because this has happened because of Ool.

Stanza 9

No one tries to get rid of Pleasure got through ool; then why do they attempt to get rid of pain got through it?

Stanza 10

Nothing is stronger than Ool, even if one find a way out Ool will make use of that way for its own use.

Part II

Wealth

Here Government is treated first because without Government, wealth could neither be got nor protected.

Chapter XXXIX

Glory of the King

Stanza 1

A good king has, these six: an army, a peopled country, food (resources of wealth) effective ministry and friendly alliances.

Stanza 2

Courage, generosity, wisdom, and enthusiasm these without limit are the natural features of (glorious) kings.

Stanza 3

Alertness, knowledge, daring, these three never leave (glorious) rulers.

Stanza 4

Kingship consists in removing in everything that is not virtuous or right, with an unimpeachable ardour.

Stanza 5

Kingship consists in producing and multiplying wealth, and protecting and devising ways to protect it.

Stanza 6

His country is great where the oppressed is not dealt with harsh words.

Stanza 7

The king who donates generously with sweet words, and is able to protect his people by his might, has everything this world can offer.

Stanza 8

The king who protects righteously will be counted as God.

Stanza 9

This world will be ruled by that king who hears with patience, unhearable words.

Stanza 10

That King is a light to Kings who has generosity, cheerfulness, equity and power to protect.

Chapter XL

Learning

Stanza 1

Learn faultlessly. Then live upto your knowledge.

Stanza 2

Those that do not know say that numbers (science) and letters (literature) are two different things. But they are the two eyes of living beings.

Stanza 3

The learned have eyes. Others have two sores on their faces.

Stanza 4

People are glad when poets (learned man) are present and when they depart their hearts feel the separation.

Stanza 5

Just as the spring gives more water, when water is drawn from it, even so, is men's knowledge when imparted to others, yields more knowledge.

Stanza 6

Just as he who has not feels in the presence of the one who has, even so unlearned feel besides the learned. The unlearned are the least.

Stanza 7

If to the learned any country or town is theirs, then why do not people learn?

Stanza 8

Learning in one birth will help a man in seven succeeding births.

Stanza 9

Seeing that Learning gives them, and also to others, pleasure, the learned fall in love with learning.

Stanza 10

The great and blameless wealth for a man is his learning. Nothing else has that glory.

THE UPANISADS

The Sanskrit treatises or dialogues known as the Upanisads are the expression of the Philosophical speculation of Indian sages and teachers during many centuries. The Indian equivalent of upanisad is 'rahasyam' 'secret' 'hidden'; the latter term always conveys the idea of secrecy or concealment of a text or doctrine, the knowledge of which should be communicated only to those who are accounted worthy. The father should teach the doctrine to his eldest son, but to no one else, whoever he may be.

The period of their fullest fruition, both mental and spiritual is supposed to have been from the eighth to the sixth century before our era. Upanisadic literature appears as the tertiary strata after the early vedic poetry and the prose-treatises of the Brahmins with their minute rituals and ceremonial observances. The earliest upanisads antedate the rise and extension of Budhism in the fifth and following centuries. The most important teaching of Buddha seems to be dependent on doctrines and premises formulated and explained in the older Upanisad literature. The present form of Upanisad treatises are contaminated by later elements.

Title and Date

With regards to the meaning and implication of the title Upanisads itself there is little or no doubt. It is derived from a Sanskrit root i.e., Upa-near, ni-down, sad=sit—that is to sit down; originally it implied the sitting down at the feet of the teacher and respectfully listening by the pupil to his master's words. In ordinary usage the word is expressing the doctrine itself which the teacher inculcates, mystical, or secret doctrine in general. It is in this sense, that the Upanisad teaching is the Vedanta the end (anta) and aim of the Veda—the sum and substance of all true wisdom and in practice and in all the Brahmanical literature, the word is thus confined to the highest most abstract teaching which are regarded as within the province of 'sruti' divine revelation.

The number of these treatises is more than a hundred. Most of the latter Upanisads are sectarian in character, exalting Vishnu or Siva or endeavouring to promote the discipline and teaching of the Yoga; many are attached to the Atharva Veda. The treatises quoted or referred to by Sankara in the ninth century in his commentaries on the sacred text are supposed to be the oldest.

Authorship

Nothing is known with certainty of the authors of these treatises. Many names of teachers or authorities have been preserved. Genealogical lists are found in some documents which trace the origin of their doctrine and confirm its authority by appeal to ancient divine sanction. For a period the teaching was entirely oral within the care and custody of the schools of learning. The doctrines taught in these schools were

regarded as a sacred and secret trust. The instruction is found in the form of a dailogue the teacher replying to the questions or answering the doubts of his disciples about an exposition of the highest knowledge or a solution of the problems and mystries of this life and of the future after death. The dialogues represent and give expression to the unsatisfied longings of the human minds and hearts.

Classification

The teaching and character of these are recognised by classifying the treatises in three or four groups. As a whole the Upanisad literature is later than 'Aranyakas' and earlier than the condensation of Philosophical rule and precept into mnemonic 'sutras' which in its extant form is placed comparatively late in the chronological order.

(*i*) The oldest group consists of six treatises such as—Brhadaranyaka, Chhandogya, Taitteriya, Aitareya, Kausitaki and Kena. These are written in prose of an archaic type. Brhadaranyaka and Chhandogya are acknowledged to be the most complete and authoritative components of Upanisad doctrine.

(*ii*) In the second group the composition is almost entirely metrical. The oldest and most independent member of the group is Katha upanisad. Then follow the Isa, Svetasvetra, Mundaka, and Mahanarayana. The leading principles of all these Upanisad's teaching are regarded as established doctrine.

(*iii*) In the treatises of the third group there has been a return again to prose but in another type that can easily be distinguished from that of the earlier Upanisadas, and the style is of the classical Sanskrit —Prasna, Maitrayania and Mandukya.

(*iv*) The larger number of the Upanisad treatises are sectarian in character or belong to the Atharva Veda or the systems or schools of the principal sects. Most part of these are written in prose more rarely in verse, or in prose and verse intermingled. The doctrine varies with the sect to which they belong; they apply Upanisad principles to sectarian ends and to establish the religious doctrines of their several creeds. The most interesting and important are those attached to the Yoga philosophy, thirty or more are usually enumerated as the oldest and most instructive.

Translation and Interpretation

It is not so easy to translate and interpret these treatises like the other scriptures of the Veda; the Texts have not been preserved in the 'Sakhas' with fidelity and accuracy from ancient times. They were evidently treated with much freedom, being revised re-edited, interpolated and in general made to conform to individual standards of orthodoxy and belief. A Persian translation was made in the year 1656 of a collection of 50 Upanisads known as up nek' hat. The text itself is the strangest medley of Latin and Persian, with Sanskrit words transliterated almost unintelligibly without a key. Ram Mohan Roy—

the great Indian reformer and founder of the Brahmo-Samaj published an English translation of several treatises. He was followed by many people in French or German. The most important and satisfactory renderings are those by Max Muller in Sacred Books of the East and by Deussen and by Hume and Radhakrishnan.

Contents and Analysis of a typical Upanisad

These are difficult to analyse on account of the desultory nature of Upanisadic style and contents. The abrupt changes of subject, the absence of any logical method or arrangement, the universal employment of metaphor are constant stumbling blocks in the way of classification. The entire treatise is subjective, rather like oral intimate instruction than of methodical exposition. The most important writings are the Brhadaranyaka and Chhandogya.

Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

It is the most interesting as it is the richest in content of all the Upanisads and presents the most systematic exposition. It is attached to Yajurveda, and in its present form is appended to and forms part of the Satapatha-Brahmana. The Upanisad in its existing form is composit and not the work of one author.

It comprises of six adhyayas, or chapters of which the last two are of later date. The first four Adhyayas are Vedantic and of these the earlier two present the philosophic doctrine of Atman which is represented as superseding and transcending the polytheistic worship of the gods. The third and fourth chapters record the final teaching of the Upanisad, in its essential and most characteristic form. Here Yajnavalkya expounds the metaphysical doctrine of Brahman or the Atman elaborately. If the name represents a real individuality and is not merely a title under whose shelter many convergent thoughts and reasonings found expression, Yajnavalkya may claim a place with the greatest thinkers of the world or of any age.

First Adhyaya. It deals with symbols and fanciful plays upon words. Mrtyu or death is at the beginning of things and produces successively the elements of speech, Vedas, and sacrifice. These are the worship of Viraj. Udgitha Brahmana describes the battle between *Devas* and *Asuras* in song (Udgitha) the antagonism of good and evil. The asuras defeat all the senses in turn, but are themselves overcome by the agencies of *Prana* or the breath, and the Devas are the victors. Various cosmological theories and processes are set forth in the fourth and following chapters, concluding with the fundamental assertion of the uhity of self (Atman) with the triad (nama) (rupa) (Karma) or name, form and work.

Second Adhyaya. It expounds the true 'Vidya' the higher knowledge of the 'atman'. The first chapter is remarkable in that it represents a Brahmin as seeking enlightenment from a ruler of the Ksatriya race. Ajatasatru of Benares who refutes his wrong conception of the Brahmana and makes known to him the real truth, concerning the nature

of the atman, in which Brahmins did not hold the practical monopoly of all knowledge, but they were equalled by members of the warrior caste. Brahman's true nature is then explained under the figure of profound slumber (ṣusupti); the sleeper is at rest, unconscious, no longer subject to any external disturbance or influence. From that atman, all pranas (senses) all worlds, all devas, all creatures proceed. The secret (Upanisad) therefore is 'the true of the true'. (Satyasya Satyam) or the most essential reality. The forms of Brahman are two; material and immaterial, mortal and immortal; the lasting and the transcient, this and that, the real and the unreal. Atman is the material which is distinct from the breath and the ether within the body (atman); This is the mortal the permanent the Sat, the essence. The eye for it is the essence of the Sat. Breath and the ether within the body are immaterial. The purusa (person) is in the right eye. For it is the essence of triad. Accordingly, its significance is expressed by neti neti (not so, not so). For beyond this which you say, 'It is not so'; its name however is the reality of reality.

The Fourth Chapter. Doctrine of the Brahman, the all comprehending, and universal self is found here; this instruction is given by Yajnavalkya to his wife Maitreyi as he is about to abandon the world for the life of a recluse. 'Not indeed for the love of husband is the husband dear, but for the love of the self (atman) the husband is dear, not indeed for the love of wife is the wife dear but for the love of the self (atman) the wife is dear; not in deed for the love of all is all dear but for the love of the self (atman) is all dear. The self indeed is to be seen, to be heard, to be perceived to be heeded O Maitreyi. When the self indeed has been seen, heard, perceived known, then all this is known.

As the sea is the meeting place of all waters, of all contacts the skin, of all tastes the tongue, of all scents the nose, of all forms the eye, of all sounds the ear, of all thoughts the mind, of all sciences the intellect, of all action the hand, the feet of all movements, speech of all the Vedas, as salt consists entirely of tastes, so atman consists entirely of knowledge, having arisen from these creatures, into them it again vanishes. After death there is no consciousness.

'Where there is duality there one sees the other, smells the other, tastes the other, hears the other. But where the self alone is, how should he see another, perceive another, greet another, know another? The self or atman is not so, not so, (neti neti) incomprehensible indestructible, unattached, unfettered, he is not pained nor suffers harm. How then should one know the knower?'

The doctrine of Brahman is set forth and elaborated in the last chapter under the symbol of honey. The adhyaya concludes by reciting the stem or geneological tree giving in succession the names of the teachers by whom the doctrine has been received. Though this has a divine and mythological origin, the names of this geneology is not entirely due to imagination or invention. It is sufficiently probable

that the fame and names of the masters of the schools would be preserved.

Adhyaya III and IV

In the Yajnavalkya—books, king Janaka is accepting a challenge which no other Brahman ventures to take up. In nine chapters questions on abstract and metaphysical problems touching the life after death and the nature of the self are put to him by his rivals; and by his successful dealing with these he vindicates his claim to be the wisest of all. The conclusion of the ninth chapter is a renewed challenge on the part of Yajnavalkya to meet any questions put to him, but no one came forward to assume the role of questioner. This book consists of an assertion of the authority and predominence of the great teacher who is explaining the ultimate truth in the dialogue form.

The first chapter contains various definitions repeated by King Janaka Vaideha about the Brahman that have been given to him as speech, breath, sight, mind, will etc. In the second and following chapters Yajnavalkya assumes the part of instructor, Brahman is the purusa in the eye; mysterious neti neti. The self is the true and only light within the heart, self illuminating and himself the light of all. 'Then is a father not a father, a mother not a mother, the gods not gods, unvexed by good, unvexed by evil. He has then over passed all the sorrows of the heart. Though he then sees not yet is he seeing for there is no interruption of seeing for the seer, because he is imperishable, but there is no second, no other distinct form that he could see.'

The senses of smell, taste, speech, hearing, thought, knowledge, predicates of ordinary life are meaningless when applied to the atman. A solitary ocean is the seer, without a second (advaita).

The fourth chapter illustrates and explains the nature of the atman. The fifth chapter is the instruction to Maitreyi, and the last chapter gives the Vamsa.

The Fifth Adhyaya opens with an invocation asserting the twofold nature of Brahman, saying that Brahman is space. The well known parable of Praja-Pati and disciples is given here. The three sons of prajapati—gods, men, and asuras—lived as students with their father when their course was over the gods said, 'Be pleased to tell us sir' 'He said to them this syllable Da' 'Have you understood ?' They said, Yes you bade us subdue ourselves (Damyata) likewise the men asked and he said to them the same syllable He bade the men to be generous (Datta). To the asuras he also said the same syllable, Da because he wanted them to be merciful. This same divine voice the thunder repeats Da, Da, Da, that is subdue yourselves, Be generous, be merciful, which means self restraint, generosity, mercy.

The other chapters of the book deals with the four feet of Gayatri; the sacred invocation of the Brahmans, each foot has a special meaning. The fourth is the bright foot and symbolises the sun or the Purusa in the sun. The last chapter is about Aditya. The sixth or final

adhyaya is Khila, in which little new information and teaching are found. The usual genealogy follows. Yajnavalkya's authority is claimed. The famous Parable of the senses and the doctrine of the five fires are explained.

History of Essential and Secondary Doctrines

The central doctrine of the Upanisads, the doctrine of atman was at first developed and systematised within Kshatriya circles and at the courts of kings. The Brahman occupied himself exclusively with the rituals and the securing of his class ascendancy. These references to a Kshatriya monopoly of the highest knowledge imparted by Kings to Brahmans at their request have been preserved and handed down within the Brahman literary schools. In later times the position was reversed and in the issue by perseverance and the skilful use of opportunity the Brahmanas secured the first place in knowledge as in honour and were regarded as the depositories of secret wisdom and right instruction. The highest and most treasured teaching was formulated as the cardinal doctrine of the upanisad literature as Idealistic monism which consisted essentially in the assertion that all is 'one only without a second' and the material universe, as it manifests itself to and is approached through the bodily faculties, is unreal (Maya). Only Brahman, the unknown self (atman) is in possession of a real existence, Atman is an abstract impersonal neutral, not an individual or masculine. The attribute of personality is denied to him and it can only be defined by negatives (neti neti). The human self (Jivatman) is subject to delusion. It imagines itself to be an individual, distinct from of all other selves. There are not two or many selves but atman, identical with Brahman.

The idealistic and monistic doctrine of the sole reality of Brahman underlies all the teaching of the Upanisads. It is developed in its most complete form and carried to its utmost logical conclusion. It expounds the doctrine of the lower Brahman.

Secondary teaching. This is a compromise with the view which the ordinary man takes of the universe as stable for all practical purposes permanent, conditioning his daily life, limiting and satisfying his outlook upon reality. This knowledge was for those who were incapable of comprehending the higher knowledge. For them it is a doctrine in which Brahman appears as the creator of the real word which is then informed sustained, and its working ensured by his universal and vitalizing presence i.e., Brahman is immanent in the world (universe) which has no existence apart from him and will ultimately be resolved or cease to be returning into the source from which it came.

Psychology

To the same secondary teaching, belongs the Psychological doctrine of the Upanisads concerning the coherent doctrine of the human soul. This teaching is also derived from external sources originally independent

and only artificially accommodated to the fundamental presupposition of Upanisad thought. Where all souls are one and there is no difference there is no room and no need for psychology. Souls created by Brahman are distinct and individual though this impression of distinctness is ultimately due to maya and to maya alone. Some provision must be made for their return, their final and universal reunion with Brahman, if a permanent duality has to be avoided. The psychological teaching explains two themes.

(*a*) The states of the soul and (*b*) the means or method of its return.

The four conditions of the soul are

(1) The waking state.

(2) The dream sleep soul remains conscious and active in its dreams.

(3) Dreamless slumber—susupti in which the soul is passive and unconscious of its environment.

(4) Turiya, chaturtha the Fourth state which is more or less artificial and is unknown to the older Upanisads Turiya being the sublime but undefinable state to which the Sanyasis had attained.

Eschatology

There are two paths in the Indian doctrine, the devayana which is the way of the gods and the pitryana the way of the fathers. By one or the other the souls of the dead make their way from this world to a future abode of happiness or misery. The theory is of independent origin in India; later was elaborated and brought into close association with the kindred doctrine of transmigration. As early as the Rigveda reference is made to the devayanas as the Path by which Agni bears the offering to the gods and on which the gods themselves descend to partake of the sacrifice thrown on the same road. The faithful worshipper ascends through successive stages to the highest felicity in Brahman.

The Pitryana on the other hand is the way of darkness for ignorant and defiled souls, and progress is marked by analogous but contrary stations e.g., the dark half of the moon is substituted for the light half. Those who travel on this road do not reach the sun but are detained in the moon till their *Karma* is exhausted. After which they return to earth and are again subject to rebirth.

Thus somewhat indefinite teaching is found with regard to the fate of the soul at and after death. Both ideas were derived from external and pre-existing sources. The thought of a return of the soul to the earth, to be embodied again in human or animal form or even in the form of an insect or plant is common to nearly all primitive people and is of great antiquity.

The distinct thought of suffering in another world for the deeds done upon the earth is neither universal nor so old.

The Upanisads writers tried to combine these ideas by transferring the retribution from an unknown and future sphere to the known and visible present and by asserting the precise equivalence of recompense after death to the deeds good or evil of the earthly life. Thus all the doctrines of Karma and transmigration are found in the oldest Upanisads.

Perhaps the best way to sum up is to say in the words of a modern Hindu philosopher, that the whole atmosphere of the upanisads seems to be ringing with mystical music and that the sages were almost intoxicated with their discovery of their highest reality or Atman in which both the microcosm and the macrocosm are united.

The greater part deals with the doctrines of the lower Brahman which is inferior to the ultimate and supreme truth that Brahman is all in all. They are half truths guiding and controlling the practical life of the universe which lose interest and significance when the full truth is realised by the soul.

Brahman alone is real. All else is maya illusion. Many conflicting thoughts meet and find a home of this word in Svetasvetara Upanisads. The man who knows this that Brahman only exists is truly wise.

The following beliefs are held on rebirth.

(1) Those who attain to the knowledge of the Identity of the Atman with Brahman reach the way of the gods. These do not return again to the earth.

(2) Those who do good works reach the way of the fathers (heaven) but reenter the cycle of rebirths after the reward of their Karma has been fully reaped.

(3) Or in-consistent with the last those who do good works reap their reward quickly by a good rebirth on earth.

(4) Those whose conduct is evil attain an evil rebirth either human or sub-human.

Ethics

In the Upanisads ethical principles are considered as natural urges or impulses of the atman that is at the back of human nature. The Upanisadic ethics aim at freeing a person from the fetters of ignorance and limitedness and making him fit for the sublime vision of his oneness with Brahman. It commands a practical life of sobriety and devotion in sincerity and love of the truth. Self restraint, generosity, loving kindness are cardinal virtues. Those who observe these find deliverance from the entanglements of this world and final union with the supreme. The aim and purpose for all and each is release from samsara, the eternal round of rebirth and return to the original and perpetual source of all in God, when the soul reaches its final end in the one supreme.

The great task of life, the summumbonum of man according to Upanisads, consists in releasing his identity with Brahman and crossing the bridge between death and life, the finite and infinite, between the individual and the absolute self. To realise this some ways are adopted,

such as the way of *knowledge* (Jnana), the ways of *Physical austerities* (tapas) and the way of mental concentration and self descipline (Yoga). The back bone of all these has to be the inner and outer purity of both mind and heart. The veil of ignorance (avidya) covers his infinite self or perfection and makes him perceive himself as imperfect while objectively and really he is divine. The morality here is positive. Abstinence from all worldly bonds is an ideal and a devotee after renouncing all, becomes self centered in profound and uninterrupted meditation.

SAMUEL A. PAUL

STUDIES IN THE BHAGAVADGITA V

The Problem of Freedom

Has man any freedom to will or desire what he wants? The very postulate of Gita assumes freedom of human will. In the last chapter Sri Krishna tells Arjun.

'Thus has wisdom more secret than all secrets, been declared to thee by Me. Reflect on it fully and do as thou *Choosest'*. (*italics* ours). (Translation Dr Radhakrishnan's).

Arjun could not be commanded to choose unless he had the power of choice. As Kant points out duty and freedom are not so much two facts, that the one is inferred from the other, but rather they are two ways characterising the same experience. So, expounders like Tilak, who emphasize 'action' describe in detail the ethics of the Gita. However, when the philosophy of the Gita is systematically analysed, the student comes across some elements that he finds it difficult to harmonise with the idea of freedom of the will.

A few of these might be taken now and examined. The first objection to be mentioned is the sovereignty of Sri Krishna Himself. He is called the Lord of Control (XVIII:78) (yogesvara). How effectively he controls is seen in the following verses. 'The Lord abides in the heart of all beings, oh, Arjuna, causing them to turn round by His power as if they were mounted on a machine' (XVIII: 61).

'Here concentrated in my body behold now, O Gudakesha, the whole universe moving and unmoving and all else thou desirest to see' (XI:7).

'I am lodged in the hearts of all; from me are memory and knowledge as well as their loss. I am indeed He who is to be known by all the Vedas. I indeed (am) the author of the Vedanta and I too am the Knower of the Vedas' (XV:15). These and many other such verses would indicate that man is conditioned or determined by Krishna completely. So, his will also is subject to Krishna's will. Man is only a puppet.

The doctrine of Karma, along with the doctrine of natural causation is another difficulty the student encounters in connection with the Gita's concept of the freedom of the Will. According to the Karma theory

we are bound by our accumulated *Sanchita Karma* that is accretions of our own past actions. In other words, man is prompted to do all his actions according to his previous karma and therefore he is not free to exercise his will. According to the theory of natural causation, every effect is determined by a uniform and relentlessly working force of matter, called Prakriti in the Gita. The following verses make this clear:

'While all kinds of work are done by the modes of nature, he whose soul is bewildered by the self-sense thinks I am the doer' III:27.

In commenting on this verse, Dr Radhakrishnan says: 'prakrteh: pradhana of Samkhya—The deluded soul attributes the act of prakrti to itself.' In another place, the Gita calls attention to five different types of factors that are necessary to produce an effect. 'O! Mighty-armed (Arjun), learn of me these five factors, for the accomplishment of all actions, as stated in the Samkhya doctrine'. (Dr Radhakrishnan states that Samkhya here means Vedant). 'The seat of action and likewise the agent, the instrument of various sorts, the many kinds of efforts and providence being the fifth. Whatever action a man undertakes by his body, mind, or speech, whether it is right or wrong these five are its factors' XVIII:13-15. The word translated 'providence' by Dr Radhakrishnan, (Daivam) is rendered 'elemental realm' by Hill. Dr Radhakrishnan thinks that it represents the non-human factor that interferes and disposes of human effort. While Dr Hill in his notes on this verse says 'daiva is the realm of the elements gross and subtle presided over by the devas, Agni being lord of fire, Vayu lord of air, etc.'

Several attempts have been made by scholars to bridge this gulf, between determinism and freedom of will in Gita. Here we briefly indicate two or three approaches:

(*a*) Theory of partial determination. According to this theory (espoused by scholars like Dr Radhakrishnan, and Divatia) nature does not absolutely determine. That is karma is not destiny. These writers compare life to a game of bridge. We did not invent the game. The cards are dealt to us over which we have no control. To this extent determinism rules. But we have quite an amount of freedom to deal with the cards that we get—by playing skilfully or otherwise. Thus we can co-operate consciously or withhold our consent. There are five factors that lead to action, and karma, or destiny or whatever daiva may mean is only one of them. Knowledge helps us to rise 'above the play of prakrti and see the real self'.

Dr Divatia in this connection says:

'It is true that the Gita uses the word Daiva as one of the factors which determine the accomplishment of actions. But as it is usual in Hindu Religion, every natural force or agency is deified to show its power and the unknown and unforeseen force which helps or hinders our actions is a force of nature or Prakriti. It is only in that sense that the word Daiva is used and not in the sense of a force which interferes

with the laws of nature or compels a man to do that only which has been ordained beforehand'. (p. 103. The Art of Life in Bhagavadgita).

(*b*) Theory of 'attachment' or 'passion'. This is really an additional argument that seeks to establish the doctrine of freedom in the Gita, and is based on the third chapter. In v. 36 Arjun asks 'by what is a man impelled to commit sin, as if by force even against his will?' In that connection the psycho-physical make-up of man especially in relation to his action is described. Sri Krishna says:

'Even the man of Knowledge acts in accordance with his own nature. Beings follow their own nature. What can repression accomplish?' III:33. This verse tells that every man has a bent of nature which must be taken into account, and that it cannot be suppressed.

However Gita here points out to a distinction between the result of an action or deed, and the attitude of love or hatred towards it. It is the craving or not craving that is the enemy that causes the mischief. So, it is stated.

'This is craving, this wrath, born of the mode of passion, all devouring and most sinful. Know this to be the enemy here. As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo in the womb, so this is covered by that passion. Enveloped is wisdom, son of Kunti, by this insatiable fire of desire which is the constant foe of the wise—Therefore O best of Bharatas (Arjuna), control thy senses from the beginning and slay this sinful destroyer of wisdom and discrimination'. III:37, 38, 39 and 41. According to these verses man is a victim of impulses. But that does not mean he has no freedom. It is his desire (or hatred) that is the main spring of impulses which could be overcome by true knowledge.

However, it must be stated, that these lines of arguments do not satisfy some critics. Their objections are taken from the view of Gita regarding existence and knowledge. That is the distinction between good and evil is valid, in Gita, only in the empiric plane. Thus Krishna teaches that the individual self (Prabhu in the original, and translated by Dr Radhakrishnan as the Sovereign self.) has nothing to do with works good or evil. Thus:

'The Sovereign Self does not create for the people agency, nor does he act. Nor does He connect works with their fruits. It is nature that works out (these). The All pervading Spirit does not take on the sin or the merit of any. Wisdom is enveloped by ignorance; thereby creatures are bewildered'. V:14 and 15.

(The word translated here The All-pervading Spirit (Vibhuh refers to individual self—though according to the Vedanta it is identical with the Supreme Self). Again in XI:33 it is stated:

'Therefore arise thou and gain glory. Conquering thy foes, enjoy a prosperous Kingdom. *By me alone are they slain already. Be thou merely the occasion*'. (Italics ours).

It seems, therefore, safe to conclude, that 'freedom' in Gita is applicable only in the empirical plane—the realm of Vyavahara. Hill says it 'is an illusery liberty of choice working within the bounds of ultimate determinism'[1].

[1] W. Douglas/ P. Hill. The Bhagavadgita, p. 48.

BOOK REVIEW

by

R. D. Immanuel

Eva Olsson: *The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* (Madras, Christian Literature Society, 1959).

The Author is to be congratulated for producing this scholarly work. Sri Aurobindo is considered to be one of the most outstanding of religious philosophers in modern India and all his disciples call him the most outstanding seer and interpreter of religion. The fact he has struck a revolutionary path for the solution of many problems makes him a unique thinker. However, he was a voluminous writer and he used many technical terms so that the average lay man is likely to be lost in the maze of complicated ideas expressed in long syllabled strange words. It is the merit of the author that she has broken down these middle walls of partition viz., bulkiness and technical phrasiology —and has made it possible for the average reader to have access to the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, and understand and appreciate it. Brevity blended with lucidity characterise these pages and the author has taken care to be accurate in describing the thoughts and appreciative in evaluating them.

There are five chapters in this book. The first one is 'Introduction'. Here an interestingly vivid account of the life of Sri Aurobindo is given. Special emphasis is given to the factors that shaped his ideas. Since this is a work on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo very little is given about his political activities or poetical writings.

The second chapter is the most important one 'outlines of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy'. With the marvellous ability and rare skill of a consummate artist, the author has with a few strokes of the pen drawn with unerring instinct clearly the most important features of the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. However, it might prove to be a bit difficult for the beginner to understand and he would do well to read this chapter twice for these pages are richly crammed with facts. Sri Aurobindo's solution of the problem of avidya 'that ignorance is not radically opposed to knowledge, but a subordinate development of Truth-consciousness, a special application of knowledge in a definite direction for a special purpose' is lucidly explained in these pages. Among other items special mention must be made of the emphasis

given to the following: 'Integral yoga', 'evolution', 'social salvation', 'superman', birth and rebirth and immortality. The author has a felicitous way of expressing briefly and lucidly conclusions of complicated problems. Example: 'Pain and pleasure are both distorted reflections on the screen of Ignorance of the secret delight of existence.'

The remaining three chapters of this book describe the connections and interconnections and variations or deviations, of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy with other systems of thought in the West and the East and with Christianity. These chapters throw a flood of light on the subject and gives a color and richness to it, that would have been missed otherwise. Thus in the chapter on Sri Aurobindo and India's ancient philosophies the author brings some very important facts by treating the subject under four heads: The relation between him and (*a*) The Vedas, (*b*) the Upanishads, (*c*) the Gita and (*d*) the Tantra. It is pointed out that he has got his own way of interpreting the Vedas and that he does not follow the interpretation of Sayana which is usually accepted. He does not actually say that Sayana was wrong. Rather Sri Aurobindo maintains that the Vedas have two interpretations—one for the initiated few who could understand the esoteric sense of the words and the other to the mass people in the ritualistic sense, and that his own (Sri Aurobindo's) is the former. In the case of Gita, however, it is pointed out that there are differences between Sri Aurobindo's teaching and that of the Gita on some points. The author points out that this is because they stand on different levels and that there is a corresponding difference in the philosophic outlook and as such it does not mean that there is a conflict between the two. Gita's yoga shows to what spiritual heights man can advance individually where as Sri Aurobindo's yoga 'wants to advance man a further step in the evolution so that he may go beyond the mind and develop higher instruments of world knowledge and world action. In the case of Tantras also, Sri Aurobindo's contribution is pointed out to be great, and this theme is developed under three heads namely:

(*a*) a synthesis of the Vedic and tantric Sadhanas.

(*b*) a cosmic enjoyment of the supreme (He is synthesised Tantric shakti with the philosophy of becoming).

(*c*) A total transformation of human nature through the descent of the Divine.

We commend this book as being authoritative and at the same time attractively lucid. It serves as a good introduction to the study of Sri Aurobindo. Students, and ministers of religion will find this book a real boon because the subtle as well as vital distinctions and differences between the various religious views are clearly and succinctly brought out. We wish to congratulate the author with the request to bring out many such books.

REMARKS GIVEN AT THE POSTGRADUATE FAREWELL FUNCTION OF LEONARD THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

by

ISAIAH JESUDHASON

At this time I would like to say some words of appreciation about the salient features of the postgraduate school here, especially about those aspects which have influenced me most and which I consider important.

1. *Postgraduate fellowship and friendship.* Our postgraduate fellowship as I understand it, is based on co-operation in the same work. Our togetherness and friendliness was not so much one of sentimental affection and feeling but one that gathers around the common task. Our joy and happiness has been to see the work growing and the task properly done. We have been bound to each other by this one task and purpose. This I think is the very secret of Christian fellowship. We are all working together for the Kingdom of God. What we have learned in a small measure here we can apply to a larger field.

2. *Discipline of life and time.* The heavy programmes and schedules of the postgraduate department have kept me always busy. Since these last three years, I could take rest only at night for a few hours. The result has been tremendous. I have achieved a great deal in my studies, more than what I have gained hitherto. I feel that if I follow this method of scheduling my time and programming my life work, I would be able to achieve a good deal in my life for the sake of Jesus Christ before my death. May God grant me courage to do and dare.

3. *Devotional aspect.* The devotional activities of this college in general have helped me a great deal to keep my zeal burning. Every day I look forward to the morning chapel services with its sermons and the evening devotional exercises. Especially I can't ever forget the Postgraduate open air sanctuary and its full moon worship with its thought-provoking addresses by our beloved Dean. This has added much to my Christian experience. The occasional devotional gatherings we have had at the home chapel of our Deans' residence, will live in my heart whenever I will kneel for prayer. I have experienced that our real strength lies in the power of God.

4. *Mental disciplines.* Many books I have studied during these three years especially pertaining to the History of Religions. I could think the thoughts of many scholars who have contributed to knowledge. This I prize greatly in my life. Some of my colleagues call me in fun as a follower of Barth and Kraemer. I am still a follower of Kraemer, in my thinking and I am proud of it. In a private talk our Dean remarked, 'You need not change your views. I think you are sincere in your views. In this department each student has full freedom to form his own way of thinking and hold any theological position within the Christian orthodoxy'. I think this a great thing. We need freedom in

our religious thinking. We need men who have different perspectives of the Gospel to enrich our Theological thinking.

These studies have opened my eyes to see clearly and deeply the other points of views, and have changed my attitude of arrogance about other views to that of patient sincere study and appreciation. Approaching from different angles we still see and establish the uniqueness of Christ and Christian faith. My faith has been much enriched by the conviction of the uniqueness of the Christian faith.

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KNOWLEDGE OF INDIA'S PEOPLE

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